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Provincial Government Investment Increases Access to Paramedic Training

College of the North Atlantic's (CNA) Bay St. George campus has established a new paramedic training program that includes some of North America's most advanced emergency response simulation equipment. The Provincial Government has invested $584,000 in the training program through its Regional/Sectoral Diversification Fund (RSDF).

"With 17 campuses in the province, CNA is Atlantic Canada's largest and most comprehensive college. It has an extensive history of producing highly-skilled graduates and advancing the province's economy," said the Honourable Trevor Taylor, Minister of Innovation, Trade, and Rural Development. "This funding enables the college to continue to research and deliver quality programs that are responsive to the changing social, personal, and economic needs of the province's western region."

The expansion of the training stems from the Williams Government's 2005 White Paper on Public Post-secondary Education which identified CNA as the provider for paramedic training in Newfoundland and Labrador. The initiative is also part of the work of the Stephenville Task Force which sought out opportunities that could build on existing programs and infrastructure as a means to increase economic activity in the region.

"The establishment of the Paramedic Training Program at our Bay St. George campus reflects the true spirit of our White Paper, demonstrating successful partnerships between each of our educational institutions," said the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education and MHA for St. George's – Stephenville East. "Through a partnership between the Bay St. George campus of the college and the Marine Institute's Safety and Emergency Response Training Centre (SERTC), students at both facilities will have access to the latest technology and world-class training, giving them the highest level of skills required in today's workplace."

After consultation with industry, the college has developed an emergency response curriculum, hired an instructor, and built a five-bed emergency room complete with computerized mannequins that can simulate any injury. Students can use the life-like mannequins to check blood pressure and heart rates, use a defibrillator and give injections. The mannequins also record how students respond to medical situations.

"These are advanced human simulators, capable of replicating every conceivable injury and symptom from childbirth to being crushed in a car wreck," said CNA president Jean Madill. "Our desire is to create in Stephenville a state-of-the-art centre for emergency first-responder training, and a paramedic training program is an important part of our plan. The site capacity will be among the very best in Canada and has potential to attract business nationally and internationally."

RSDF is a $5 million fund that is administered by the Department of Innovation, Trade, and Rural Development. It provides non-repayable contributions for economic development initiatives that address regional and sectoral development and diversification.

The White Paper on Public Post-secondary Education is the Provincial Government's $90 million strategy to increase the quality, access and affordability of post-secondary education while positioning educational institutions to contribute to the economic growth of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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